



ASSAM ONCOLOGIST WITH ROOTS IN CHENNAI WINS MAGSAYSAY AWARD

R RAVI KANNAN, A NATIVE OF CHENNAI, DEVELOPED CACHAR CANCER HOSPITAL INTO A COMPREHENSIVE CARE CENTRE

Cachar Hospital, headed by Kannan since 2007, provides free or subsidised cancer care treatment to 5,000 new patients annually

Ravi surprised all when he decided to shift from a big city to a small town
Kannan said he is setting up smaller hospitals in different parts of the state and even in nearby Tripura so that people do not have to travel far for treatment | P10



CACHAR HAS 28 DEPTS AND EMPLOYS 451, UP FROM 23 WHEN HE TOOK OVER

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Spl Parliament session gambit

To be held from Sept 18 to 22, speculation on advancing polls, simultaneous elections bill

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR
@ New Delhi

THE Centre on Thursday sprang a surprise by announcing a special session of Parliament from September 18-22, reviving speculation of early Lok Sabha elections.

The special session will be held about one-and-a-half months before the winter session of Parliament is due, which usually is in November. Union Parliamentary minister Prahlad Joshi made the announcement through a post on X, adding the special session would have five sittings.

It will be the first such spe-

cial session ever since Narendra Modi became prime minister in 2014. Both Houses of Parliament would meet separately for five full days. On June 30, 2017, the government had convened a special joint sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to mark the midnight rollout of the GST regime.

A well placed source said the government will go into poll mode after the special session, both for the upcoming state elections and the 2024 general elections. The government could also try to test the Opposition on the principle of one nation, one election (ONOE) by introducing a bill on it during



the special session.

Speculation is also rife that the Modi government would bring the women's reservation bill and the Uniform Civil Code bill, in addition to the ONOE bill. "Since all of these bills are associated with the BJP's poll agenda, the government may introduce them to reaffirm to its voters the party's commitment to its poll planks," said a

BJP office bearer.

With the G20 summit ending on September 10, the special session is also expected to discuss its outcome and dedicate it to the nation.

The dates for the special session coincide with the upcoming Ganapati festival, which is celebrated in a big way in Maharashtra and other states. Some Opposition MPs urged the government to reconsider the schedule.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh alleged that the special session was aimed at managing "the news cycle" and countering the news about the ongoing meeting of INDIA.

Ready for J&K poll, up to EC to decide schedule, says govt

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

THE Centre on Thursday told the Supreme Court that it is ready to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir once the Election Commission of India decides the dates. However, it did not give a timeframe on restoring statehood to J&K, though it reiterated that its current status as a Union Territory was temporary.

Update of the voters' list is almost complete, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed a Constitution bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud. As to when elections would be held, it for the State Election Commission and the Election Commission of India to decide after considering the overall situation, he said. Elections at three levels are due—panchayat, municipality



and the legislative Assembly. "As far as statehood is concerned, Union Territory is a temporary phenomenon," Mehta said. "We are dealing with extraordinary situation. State will have to be infused with several things so that it becomes a state so to say," he added.

Highlighting the positives post revoking Article 370, Mehta said infiltration, law and order issues, stone pelting, hartals have all come down. The Centre has taken various steps to boost investments in the area and several projects have come up, he pointed out.

However, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners, alleged that the Centre is trying to project an image of normalcy in J&K while house arrest and Internet shutdown are on in the Union Territory. **CONTINUED ON P10**

GOOD NEWS BUT...

GDP grows by 7.8% in first quarter

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

INDIA'S GDP grew at 7.8% in the first quarter of the current fiscal, making it one of the fastest growing economies in April-June, surpassing China's 6.3%. However, the growth rate is less than RBI's estimate of 8% and the projections made by SBI (8.2%). The GDP in the previous quarter (January-March) grew at 6.1%, while in the first quarter of last year, it grew at 13.1%.

"India's economy in Q1 grew at the fastest pace in a year, on the shoulders of a boost in capital expenditure both at Central and state levels, along with stronger consumption demand, especially in rural areas, and improved performance in the services sector," Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran said. He added that the country would grow at 6.5% in the current year in spite of deficient monsoon.

EXPRESS READ

Bescom power tariff up by ₹1.15/unit for Sept

Bengaluru: Bescom has revised the power tariff. As per the orders, consumers will now pay an additional 51p/unit for the billing cycle from July to September and 50p/unit from October to December. The cost per unit of will increase by Rs 1.15 instead of 70p for September.

Int'l flights to shift to KIA's T2 from Sept 12

Bengaluru: International flights will begin operating from Terminal 2 of KIA from September 12, Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) announced on Thursday. Singapore Airlines will operate the first flight (SQ 508) to arrive at the new terminal from Singapore at 10.55 am. **P2**

Sharpshooter injured in jumbo attack dies in hosp

BR UDAYA KUMAR @ Hassan

A 64-year-old sharpshooter, who suffered serious injuries when an elephant attacked him in a forest at Alur in Hassan district on Thursday, died at HIMS Hospital.

The deceased Venkatesh was summoned by the forest department to tranquillise Bheema, an elephant, who suffered injuries in a tussle with another tusker in July. Veterinarians treated Bheema two days ago and released him in the forest. As Bheema needed further treatment, the forest officials sought the assistance of Venkatesh for tranquillisation

after obtaining permission for the same from the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.

During the operation, Bheema, who was darted, suddenly turned around and attacked Venkatesh. The sharpshooter was standing 20ft away from the elephant, according to a forest official.

Though Venkatesh was rushed to HIMS Hospital, he succumbed to injuries there around 2 pm.

Venkatesh, who had tranquillised over 50 rogue elephants and other wild animals in Karnataka and neighbouring states in his 25-year career, worked as a daily wage with the forest department. **P5**

Cauvery: K'taka to present case before SC today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

DEPUTY CM DK Shivakumar on Thursday said Karnataka has complied with the directive to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu and will explain the ground reality in its Cauvery basin to the Supreme Court, which will hear TN's plea for release of 24,000 cusecs on Friday.

Meanwhile, farmers, Kannada activists and members of Dalit organisations staged protests across Mandya district against the release of water to TN. Shivakumar said members of CWRC and CWMA will be invited to visit the state's dams within 15 days. **FULL REPORT: P4**

Cong leader assaults official, booked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Kalaburagi

A local Congress leader assaulted an health inspector of Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike (KMF) and threatened to kidnap his children on Wednesday for the delay in Palike hiring his vehicle.

An FIR has been filed against the leader and his associate in

this connection.

Confirming the assault, Palike Commissioner Bhuvanesh Patil told reporters on Thursday that Congress leader Avinash Bhaskar and his associate Raju went to the Palike office and started arguing with health inspector Dhanashetty over the matter.

Avinash and Raju dragged Dhanashetty to a room and as-

saulted him. This happened in the presence of some employees of the Palike. Avinash and Raju were drunk, according to the employees.

Dhanashetty and his colleagues, who went to Bramhapur police station in the evening to file a complaint, returned home after seeing a big group of supporters of Avinash there. **P4**

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